



King County



Customer Newsletter

May 2010

In this issue

- 1 Customer-oriented reforms at DDES
- 1 New efficiencies in residential permit process
- 2 Energy grant will assist customers with Green Building Proposals
- 2 Free home earthquake retrofit permits
- 2 Updates to International Building Code effective July 1, 2010

DDES customer service numbers

DDES General Customer Assistance

206-296-6600

Permit Application Appointments

206-296-6797

Billing Hotline

206-296-6659

DDES Records Center

206-296-6696

Media and Public Disclosure Inquiries

206-296-6682

DDES Director, John Starbard

206-296-6700

Deputy Director, Joe Miles

206-296-7179

Building and Fire Svcs. Director, Jim Chan

206-296-6740

Permit Center, Jarrod Lewis

206-296-6713

Plan Review, Chris Ricketts

206-296-6750

Building Inspections, Bernard Moore

206-296-6762

Code Enforcement, Deidre Andrus

206-296-6680

Current Planning, Lisa Dinsmore

206-296-7171

Land Use Division Director, Randy Sandin

206-296-6778

Engineering, Molly Johnson

206-296-7178

Clearing & Grading, Steve Bottheim

206-296-7144

Critical Areas, Steve Bottheim

206-296-7144

Customer-oriented reforms at DDES stress predictable fees and attention to rural customer base

King County Executive Dow Constantine has transmitted his plan to the King County Council for customer-oriented reforms at DDES. There are four cornerstones to the Executive's plan:

1. DDES will not propose an increase to the hourly rate for permit review fees in 2010 as previously anticipated. This is due to the need to develop an entirely new DDES fee structure;
2. DDES will begin work developing a new fee structure emphasizing flat fees, giving permit customers more predictability during the permit review process. This new fee structure will also focus on full cost recovery and long-term sustainability;
3. DDES will develop a new work unit specifically responsible for processing permits and providing customer assistance primarily in the rural area; and
4. King County will continue to work with cities on annexation initiatives, eventually positioning DDES as a permitting agency primarily serving rural customers.

A fee structure emphasizing flat fees, along with a work unit providing direct assistance to rural property owners, will strengthen DDES so that it is better positioned for the future. DDES looks forward to putting these systems in place in the coming months.

For additional information, see the King County Executive's April 20, 2010 press release at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/news/release/2010/April/20DDES-Reform.aspx>, or contact DDES Director John Starbard at 206-296-6700.

New efficiencies in residential permit process reduce customer fees and deliver permits faster

DDDES has activated a new screening strategy for residential permit applications which bypasses our traditional, linear movement through various review stations. As of March, 2010, the most straightforward residential building proposals – essentially, those with ground infrastructure already in place – will skip some of the preliminary review stations required in the past, potentially saving several weeks of review time and also reducing permit fees.

Examples of residential proposals qualifying for expedited review include adding a second story to an existing home, or building a home within an existing subdivision. These types of proposals can skip some traditional preliminary reviews such as fire flow and site visit, and go straight to the building plan review phase. DDES estimates that approximately 30 percent of the 2010 residential permit applications may qualify for this new program.

For additional information, please contact Jim Chan, DDES Building and Fire Services Division Director, at 206-296-6740.

DDES secures \$200,000 energy grant to assist customers with green building proposals

A \$200,000 energy grant from the Federal Department of Energy will help permit applicants achieve more efficient and environmentally-friendly designs within their development proposals. This grant will fund direct customer assistance at DDES and permit customers will see the following services associated with green building:

- Free technical assistance for planning green construction and meeting energy code standards;
- Free guidance in obtaining LEED, National Green Building Standards, and BuiltGreen certification; and
- Priority processing for permits that achieve a professionally recognized green building certification.

DDES is also investigating the feasibility of integrating green building certification into the permit process. This would allow builders to have their project certified directly by DDES, without having to use a third-party service.

For additional information on topics related to green construction, contact Jane McPherson in the Building and Fire Services Division at 206-296-7255.



A \$200,000 grant from the Federal Department of Energy will allow DDES to offer enhanced customer assistance to permit applicants seeking environmentally friendly designs.

DDES helps homeowners prepare for an emergency with free home earthquake retrofit permits

DDES is helping citizens in unincorporated King County prepare for an earthquake emergency with free home earthquake retrofit permits on homes that meet specific criteria.

DDES Customer Information Bulletin #50, *Obtaining A Voluntary Home Earthquake Retrofit Permit*, is available on line at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/publications/bulletins.aspx> and outlines criteria for securing a free retrofit permit from DDES. To request application materials, please call the DDES Permit Center at 206-296-6600.

Earthquake retrofit permits can usually be issued over the counter if a complete application is submitted. (Homes that do not meet key criteria can still secure a retrofit permit. The process involves more review time and permit review fees are charged.)

DDES encourages homeowners to take advantage of this important program. We place a high value on helping King County residents prepare their homes in advance of an earthquake, and therefore avoid any need for significant repairs afterward. The correct application of modern building codes can minimize earthquake damage to homes, just as they did during the Nisqually earthquake experienced by this region in 2001. Application of these codes during the DDES permit review process directly benefits the citizens in unincorporated King County.

For additional information on earthquake retrofit permits at DDES, please contact Beverly Ferrato in the DDES Plan Review Section at 206-296-6755.

Updates to International Building Code (IBC) go into effect July 1, 2010

The Washington State Building Codes are updated and will take effect in King County, along with all other government jurisdictions in Washington, on July 1, 2010. This code update covers regulations associated with structural design, fire safety, accessibility, energy efficiency, and mechanical and plumbing standards for all new and existing construction.

Some specific topics covered in the code updates include:

- Changes to the State Energy Code, including increased insulation levels, field testing requirements and higher efficiency mechanical systems;
- The Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality Code was included within the residential, building, and mechanical codes.
- Carbon monoxide detectors will be required for all new residential structures. Multi-family dwelling units will also be required to comply beginning January 2013.
- A "flow-through" residential sprinkler design method was added to the Residential Code.

All permit applications submitted after July 1, 2010, must comply with the new code changes and training classes are being coordinated regionally. Several training opportunities can be found through the Washington Association of Building Officials Web site at: <http://www.wabo.org/>, or through other professional organizations. DDES will provide updated technical literature shortly—watch for it at the DDES Web site at www.kingcounty.gov/permits.

Direct questions on the July 1, 2010 code update to Chris Ricketts of DDES Plan Review at 206-296-6750.